and IT based consumer service centres and Part-B is regular distribution strengthening projects. The objective of the scheme is to reduce the AT and C losses to 15% in the project areas at the end of the scheme. The Utilities are also to achieve the following target of AT&C loss reduction at utility level:

- Utilities having AT and C loss above 30%: Reduction by 3% per year
- Utilities having AT and C loss below 30%: Reduction by 1.5% per year

Initially funds will be provided as loan, which will be converted into grant on achieving the AT and C loss reduction targets. 1022 projects at the cost of Rs. 3561.93 crore have been approved and Rs. 584.31 crores have been released by the Power Finance Corporation to fifteen state utilities under Part-A of the scheme.

(c) and (d) In part-A of Restructured-APDRP, there is inbuilt provision that every utility has to meter every feeder and distribution transformer in the project area for the successful completion of the scheme. As per information available at national level 98% feeders have been metered. 20 States have achieved 100% feeder metering. The Distribution Transformer metering level is 11%. Overall 88% of the consumers have been metered in the country. Two States (Kerala and Himachal Pradesh) and Union Territories Chandigarh and Daman and Diu have achieved 100% consumer metering.

Implementation of centrally sponsored schemes by States

*423. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that State Governments are facing serious difficulties in implementing various centrally sponsored schemes, as the applicable norms do not suit the conditions specific to States;

(b) if so, whether the Kerala Government has pointed out the matter to the Central Government; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (c) Various State Governments have been raising the matter of building in greater flexibility in the guidelines for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) so as to be better able to meet the specific needs and conditions in each State. Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission has requested all Chief Ministers in December, 2008 to review the matter and provide specific suggestions for changing the guidelines in a manner which would make it easier for flow of resources.

The Government of Kerala has suggested that CSS should insist only on broad objectives of the programme and allow the States to introduce flexibility in the norms of CSS to match regional

requirements. Government of Kerala has also stated that NREGA guidelines may be modified to suit the specific conditions prevailing in the State like long monsoon season and availability of very little public land. They have suggested that:

- NREG could be used for replanting perennial crops.
- NREG could be used for land and water development activities for small and marginal farmers.
- NREG may be used for collection of coconut husk by Kudumbasree Group.

NREG guidelines have been modified in July 2009 to include provision of irrigation facility, horticulture plantation and land development facilities to land owned by, *Inter alia*, small farmers or marginal farmers as defined in the Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme 2008.

Changes in mining policy

*424. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to bring sweeping changes in the mining policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken the views of the mining experts and the State Governments, before bringing about such changes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) and (b) The Government has already enunciated the new National Mineral Policy, 2008, taking into consideration the views of mineral bearing States. The new National Mineral Policy has been tabled in the both Houses of Parliament, on 20.3.2008 in Rajya Sabha and on 16.4.2008 in Lok Sabha and is available on the website of Ministry of Mines *(http://mines.nic.in)*. The new Policy has enunciated policy measures like assured right to next stage mineral concession, transferability of mineral concessions and transparency in allotment of concessions and measures to reduce delays which are seen as impediments to investment and technology flow in the mining sector in India. The Policy also seeks to develop a sustainable framework for optimum utilisation of the country's natural mineral resources for the industrial growth in the country and at the same time improving the life of people living in the mining areas, which are generally located in the backward and tribal regions of the country.

(c) and (d) Government had constituted a Committee on 14.09.2005 under the chairmanship of Shri Anwarul Hoda, Member Planning Commission to review the National Mineral Policy and to suggest changes in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation)